Spring 1-1-2012

The Evolution of a Legend--A Comparison of the Character of Tamamo no mae Portrayed in Muromachi Period Otogizōshi and in the Late-Edo Vendetta Tale, Itoguruma kyūbi no kitsune (The Spinning Wheel and the Nine-Tailed Fox)

Ian Stuart Ferguson
University of Colorado at Boulder, ian.s.ferguson@colorado.edu

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by

IAN STUART FERGUSON

B.A., Brigham Young University—Hawaii, 2007

A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of the Graduate School of the

University of Colorado in partial fulfillment

of the requirement for the degree of

Masters of Arts

Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations

2012

This thesis entitled:

THE EVOLUTION OF A LEGEND—A COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTER OF TAMAMO NO MAE PORTRAYED IN MUROMACHI PERIOD *OTOGIZŌSHI* AND IN THE LATE-EDO VENDETTA TALE, *ITO GURUMA KYŪBI NO KITSUNE (THE SPINNING WHEEL AND THE NINE-TAILED FOX)*

written by Ian Stuart Ferguson

has been approved for the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations

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R. Keller Kimbrough

_____

Satoko Shimazaki

_____

Laurel Rodd

Date_____

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

Ferguson, Ian Stuart (M.A., Asian Languages and Civilizations)

The Evolution of a Legend—A Comparison of the Character of Tamamo no Mae Portrayed in Muromachi Period *Otogizōshi* and in the Late-Edo Vendetta Tale, *Itoguruma kyūbi no kitsune (The Spinning Wheel and the Nine-Tailed Fox)*

Thesis directed by Professor R. Keller Kimbrough

The fictitious character Tamamo no mae has been featured throughout Japanese literature and folk arts for centuries. Her earliest accounts in literature seem to come from the Muromachi period, during which her various stories, now classified as *otogizōshi* (companion tales), were produced and principally preserved in *nara ehon*-style picture books and also *emaki* picture scrolls. From the Muromachi to the late Edo period, her character has endured many changes, which have altered her personality and positioned her in many roles. Through examining a variety of textual accounts from the mid-Muromachi period to the late Edo period, we can see that the transformation in Tamamo no mae's persona seems to have resulted from specific changes in religious and social values over the course of history. This essay explores different textual accounts of the legendary Tamamo no mae, with particular emphasis on the late Edo work, *Ito guruma kyūbi no kitsune (The Spinning Wheel and the Nine-Tailed Fox)*. My primary purpose will be to demonstrate how the changes in her persona reflect a shift in values from the Muromachi period, when she first emerged in literature, to the late Edo period when *Ito guruma kyūbi no kitsune* was composed. In order to illuminate the significance of Tamamo no mae's various representations, I will seek to contextualize her tales within the appropriate social, political, and religious movements of the times.

Dedicated to my father and mother, who taught me to love learning

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Near Nasu hot springs in Tochigi prefecture is a rock called Sesshōseki 殺生石, or the "killing stone." It is said to be inhabited by the spirit of an evil woman named Tamamo no mae 玉藻の前 and allegedly spits out poisonous gas that kills all living creatures who pass by it. The earliest medieval texts of this folk legend depict Tamamo no mae as one of the most malicious and subversive female figures in Japanese mytho-history. According to these tales, she was the most favored courtesan of the retired Emperor Toba 鳥羽院, and was considered the most beautiful, intelligent, and mysterious woman of her day. No matter what question she was asked, she knew the answer, and even her body emitted an eerie glow in the dark. Eventually, the emperor became ill and requested the help of his diviner, Abe no Yasunari 安倍泰成. Abe explained that the sickness came from Tamamo no mae, who, according to his skills in divination, was actually a fox spirit who had been involved in the downfall of both Prince Hanzoku 班足太子 in India and King Yū 幽王 in China.[1] Abe further counseled Toba that she was plotting his demise as well. After being caught in a trap by Abe, she revealed her true form as a fox and was pursued to the plains of Nasuno 那須野—present-day Tochigi Prefecture—

[1] In some versions of this story, Tamamo no mae is associated not with the Chinese Empress Hōji 褒姒 of the Zhō Dynasty, but rather with Dakki 妲妃 of the Yin dynasty—another evil concubine.

where she was shot and killed by the warriors Miura no suke 三浦之介 and Kazusa no suke 上総之介.[2]

From her earliest depictions in the Muromachi to the late Edo period, Tamamo no mae's character has been the subject of countless folk tales, legends, noh and kabuki plays, art, and music; This stream even trickles into modern literature and pop culture. It is interesting to consider the factors that may have contributed to her long life in the arts of Japan over the past six hundred years. However, her most interesting aspect—and possibly the reason why she continues to be so popular—is that her character in these various arts seems to evolve over time. Through examining a variety of textual accounts from the mid-Muromachi period to the late Edo period, we can see that the transformation in Tamamo no mae's persona seems to have resulted from specific changes in religious and social values over the course of history. This essay explores different textual accounts of the legendary Tamamo no mae, with particular emphasis on the late-Edo work, *Ito guruma kyūbi no kitsune (The Spinning Wheel and the Nine-Tailed Fox)*. My primary purpose will be to demonstrate how the changes in her persona reflect a shift in values from the Muromachi period, when she first emerged in literature, to the late Edo period, when *Ito guruma kyūbi no kitsune* was composed. In order to illuminate the significance of Tamamo no mae's various representations, I will seek to contextualize her tales within the appropriate social, political, and religious movements of the times.

TAMAMO NO MAE IN THE MUROMACHI PERIOD

[2] "Tamamo no mae," in *Nihon kokugo daijiten,* vol. 13 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2001), 192. "Nasunohara," in *Nihon kokugo daijiten,* vol. 15 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2001), 248.

If we track Tamamo no mae's journey through literature, we first discover her as a character in the mid-Muromachi period, where the story of Tamamo no mae is principally preserved as *otogizōshi* (companion tales) in *nara ehon*-style picture books and also *emaki* picture scrolls.[3] Although many variants of this story circulated in the Muromachi period and long after, the *otogizōshi* that are the most readily available in modern typeset editions are *Tamamo no mae monogatari* 玉藻前物語 (circa 1470), *Tamano no mae* 玉藻の前 (date unknown), and *Tamamo no sōshi* 玉藻の草紙 (1653).[4] While the first two texts are relatively similar, the third text, *Tamamo no sōshi*, published by Nishida Shōhei in 1653, contains an addendum to the original story: an account of Tamamo no mae's spirit embedding itself into a rock on the plains of Nasu after her death. This stone is said to have become dangerous, emitting poisonous gas to kill every living thing that came near. It was thus that the legend of the Sesshōseki, or the "killing stone," came into being.[5]

This 1653 account of the story marks a pivotal turn in the history of Tamamo no mae's persona. Up until the early Edo period, the influence of Buddhism on Japanese literature was

[3] Tamamo no mae's character was loosely based on two characters in ancient Indian and Chinese folklore. The story of Prince Hanzoku of the country of Tenjiku 天竺 (India), dating back to the early fifteenth century *Sangoku denki* 三国伝記 (Tales of Three Countries), is based on the Indian tale of King Kalmasapada, a legendary king born from a human father and a lion mother who lusted after human flesh. King Hanzoku is said to have worshipped the Tsuka no kami 塚の神 (god of the graveyards), pledging the heads of one thousand kings as an offering to it ("Hanzoku Taishi," in *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, vol. 16, 534). This Tsuka no kami was the first character to have influenced the creation of the Tamamo no mae character. In China, the story of King Yū found in both the 13th century *Jikkinshō* 十訓抄 (A Miscellany of Ten Maxims) and the 14th century *Genpei jōsui ki* 源平盛衰記 speaks of the evil Empress Hōji who led King Yū's dynasty to ruin, and she is the second character on whom Tamamo no mae was modeled.

[4] Yokoyama Shigeru and Matsumoto Ryūshin, eds., *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei,* vol. 9 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1981), 13-58.

[5] "Sesshōseki" in *Nihon kokugo daijiten,* vol. 12, 33.

strong. Whereas some medieval texts describe Tamamo no mae as someone who desired power[6] and had a strong aversion to religion,[7] the 1653 *Tamamo no sōshi* recasts the malicious Tamamo no mae as repentant, submissive, and desiring Buddhahood—a new representation showing a radically different attitude toward the very ideology Tamamo no mae is previously said to have fought. The explanation of her repentance is contained in a portion of *Tamamo no sōshi* in which a famous Sōtō Zen priest named Gennō encounters the stone in his travels. He is first approached by the spirit of Tamamo no mae, which tells him of her travails. Moved by the story, Gennō exorcizes the spirit by taking up a staff and cracking the stone in two. After doing so, he holds a Buddhist memorial service for the angry spirit, enabling it to finally be at peace.[8]

Notably, this repentant Tamamo no mae appears only in the 1653 edition of *Tamamo no sōshi* and in the closely related noh play, *Sesshōseki* 殺生石, which seems to have been created at roughly the same time. It is interesting to note that in both of these accounts, Tamamo no mae overtly states that she had been an "enemy of Buddhism." Sanari Kentarō explains this in his summary of the play *Sesshōseki*, in which Tamamo no mae is described as "the demon fox Tamamo no mae who fought against the *laws of the Buddha* and the laws of the King in the three

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[6] Ichiko, Teiji, ed. *Genpei seisuiki*, Vol. 6. (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 1991), 217-221.

[7] In every one of her accounts, she is recorded as having intentions of overturning the emperor's government (王法を傾けむため). The term *ōbō* 王法 is used to describe the unification of politics and religion during this time in which laws and regulations were predicated upon Buddhist teachings—the ideology that Tamamo no mae was fighting against. "Ōbō" in *Kōjien* (Tokyo: Iwanami shōten, 2008), 354.

[8] Michael Bathgate explains that after the fox spirit was exorcized, it became enshrined as a tutelary deity of Nasuno, and was given the name of Sasahara Inari. Michael Bathgate, *The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Folklore: Shapeshifters, Transformations, and Duplicities* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3. The actual spot of the Sesshōseki is a huge tourist attraction today. Additionally, Gennō's bush hammer—the tool used to crack open the Sesshōseki in some versions of the story—is believed to have inspired the creation of the modern Japanese *gennō* 玄翁 hammer. Gennō and the flying pieces of the Sesshōseki appear in the folk tales of different Japanese locales. Some towns even claim to have pieces of the stone in their local shrines. "Gennō," in *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, vol. 7, 348.

countries of Tenjiku (India), Tōdo (China), and Nihon (Japan)."[9] Obviously, the authors of these texts went to great lengths to establish that Tamamo no mae was not just a conniving woman, but one who was specifically antagonistic toward Buddhism. However, in *Tamamo no sōshi* and *Sesshōseki* she is portrayed as being remorseful for her actions, and anxious to embrace Buddhism.

One of my primary concerns in this essay pertains to the reasons for the portrayal of Tamamo no mae's remorse and her radically different outlook on Buddhism in these two texts. These two texts, undoubtedly created in and influenced by the highly religious atmosphere of the times, open the story of Tamamo no mae up to new interpretations and cause us to re-read it in a new light.[10] We are led to conclude that Tamamo no mae accepted Buddhism and that the story ends with her enlightenment. However, an analysis of historical and cultural factors suggests that uncritically accepting her conversion only provides us with a portion of the truth.

BUDDHIST INFLUENCE IN MUROMACHI PERIOD LITERATURE

In order to understand the reasons why Tamamo no mae was cast as a repentant character in both the 1653 *Tamamo no sōshi* and the noh play *Sesshōseki*, it is important to consider the religiosity promulgated during the late Muromachi period. The Zen school had become one of the most popular Buddhist sects during this time. Zen teachings were espoused by monks such as the Rinzai Zen monk Musō at the beginning of the Muromachi period, and came to have a strong influence on the arts, literature, and, in particular, political leaders. Stories were employed as a means by which evangelical priests could propagate their religious ideals.

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[9] Sanari Kentarō, *Yōkyoku taikan,* vol. 3 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1983), 441.

[10] Although there may be no "original" version of this story, in earlier accounts of Tamamo no mae, she is never seen to have embraced Buddhism.

The Muromachi period was an age when more stories were being produced and made available for the broader public, compared to the Heian and Kamakura periods when literature tended to be consumed solely by members of the upper class. Buddhist priests of all varieties seemed to have used some of this popular literature in their efforts to spread Buddhist doctrines to the common sector of society. These stories were later rewritten and referred to as *otogizōshi* (companion tales), which were popular during the middle ages.[11] Buddhist narrative literature had already enjoyed a long history in Japan: monks would select stories "that could be used to teach a moral lesson and that would help to lead readers or listeners to a state of enlightenment."[12] In many cases, the original stories had no moral, so the story-telling monks would take the liberty of adding a section to express a lesson. As Barbara Ruch explains, "the practice of borrowing a story from current folklore and embellishing it with a moral lesson or some word of advice established as a precedent in the Buddhist narrative tradition became an important feature outside of that tradition in the later medieval short stories."[13]

As Mulhern explains, some works of medieval fiction in the *emaki* (picture scroll) format were "widely used by itinerant Buddhist monks and nuns in what is called *etoki* (picture elucidation) during the medieval period. These people made their living by explaining or dramatically reciting the stories represented in religious, and later even secular, picture scrolls,

[11] Although, strictly speaking, the term *otogizōshi* refers to the works in the *Otogi bunko* (published ca. 1716-1729), a particular collection of medieval fiction for non-elite audiences, Mulhern states, "all the short stories written in the later middle ages (1300-1600) are usually inclusively called Otogi zōshi." Chieko Irie Mulhern, "Otogi-zōshi: Short Stories of the Muromachi Period," *Monumenta Nipponica* 29, no. 2 (1974), 184.

[12] Barbara Ruch, "Origins of The Companion Library: An Anthology of Medieval Japanese Stories," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 30, no. 3 (1971), 600.

[13] Ruch, "Origins of The Companion Library," 600.

while at the same time visually pointing to relevant scenes in the scrolls."[14] It is quite possible that the Sesshōseki addendum in *Tamamo no sōshi,* along with other variants existing in the *emaki* form, were created and used for such a purpose.

In addition, Mulhern points out that some of the more Buddhist didactic *otogizōshi*

> primarily teach Buddhism through exemplification of virtues . . . or religious anecdotes of miracles and deities. Tales concerning an eminent priest's life or the origin of a Buddhist deity emphasize the protagonist's suffering before he achieves the status of a noble priest or deity. The sources of these stories are often folk tales and legends of Japan, China, and India."[15]

Indeed, the miraculous story of Tamamo no mae's conversion, the origins of Gennō's fame, as well as the base in Indian and Chinese folklore are representative of this kind of adaptation during the religious fervor of the Muromachi period.

Lastly, a common theme in this kind of Buddhist fiction is the belief that "the difficulties and misfortunes in real life can be completely remedied by, and almost solely by, divine power,"[16] which suggests why the author decided to take the character Tamamo no mae, outcast and left with a vengeful spirit, and make an example out of her sufferings through the power of Buddhist conversion.

In addition to Muromachi popular literature explicitly expressing strong Buddhist messages, noh plays were also frequently based upon similar Buddhist principles and themes. In contrast to *genzai nō*, or "plays about living characters" plays, *mugen nō*, or "plays about spirits and ghosts," are plays in which the spirits of dead historical figures desire Buddhahood and

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[14] Mulhern, "Otogi-zōshi," 184.

[15] Mulhern, "Otogi-zōshi," 188-189.

[16] Mulhern, "Otogi-zōshi," 189.

entreat a priest to say prayers for them.[17] Donald Shively gives an overview of a typical structure of a *mugen nō* play that provides the framework in which these encounters occur:

> The deuteragonist (*waki*) is usually a Buddhist monk on a pilgrimage in some remote area, where he encounters a local woman (or man), the protagonist (*shite*), who engages him in conversation. As they discuss some historical event which occurred at this place—a battle or a tragic love affair—the protagonist shows a knowledge of the main participant in the event which is so detailed and intimate that the monk, his curiosity and suspicions aroused, asks who she is. The protagonist gives some indication that she is the ghost of that person in disguised form, and, with the suggestion that she will reappear later, fades from view. In the second part of the play the protagonist appears to the monk again, this time in the form of the historical person returned from Hades to attempt to gain release from the bonds of her transgression. She performs a dance in which, to the accompaniment of the poetry or lyrical prose of the chorus, she mimes the action. The monk, by reciting sutras or incantations, is finally able to free the ghost from her bonds so that she may be reborn in the Western Paradise and attain Buddhahood.[18]

In addition to this kind of miraculous transformation, *mugen nō* plays of this period also focus on the attainment of Buddhahood for non-sentient objects in nature, such as trees, flowers, or plants. It was commonly believed that inanimate and animate objects, although considered sacred in the Shinto framework, were able to benefit from Buddhist conversion and salvation. A common refrain in these noh plays when dealing with the enlightenment of inanimate objects is taken from the chapter titled "Parable of Medicinal Herbs" in the *Lotus Sutra* that states "the grasses and trees and land will all become buddhas" (草木國土　悉皆成佛)—a passage which is also contained word-for-word in *Sesshōseki*.[19] Shively states that out of "two hundred and forty plays, eleven are on this theme and at least eighteen others contain references to the

[17] "Types of Noh Plays," The Japan Arts Council, accessed Oct 04, 2011. The Association for Japanese Noh Plays. http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/noh/en/index.html.

[18] Donald Shiveley, "Buddhahood For the Nonsentient: A Theme in No Plays," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 20, no. 1/2 (1957), 136.

[19] Burton Watson, trans. *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 97.

miracle."[20] Significantly, the story of Sesshōseki exhibits both these trends—the attainment of Buddhahood both by a prominent historical figure and by a non-sentient rock.

Changes in Literature and Culture in the Edo Period

The aforementioned Buddhist ideologies were popular throughout the rest of the Muromachi period and into the early Edo period.[21] It was not until the mid-Edo period that cultural trends began to shift, influencing the tone, style, and purpose of popular fiction in comparison to the fiction of the earlier Muromachi period. Whereas fiction was used by evangelical priests proselytizing to and teaching Buddhist beliefs to the common people during the Muromachi period, the culture of the Edo period—which lasted for more than two hundred and fifty years—was constantly changing and instilling new beliefs, customs, and practices into its popular fiction. Many of these changes came as a result of political influence, social reorganization, higher levels of literate non-elite, popular theater, and fears for the future, all of which in turn influenced the characterization of Tamamo no mae as she began appearing in literature and the performing arts again.

In 1634, the shogunate implemented a policy called *sankin kōtai* (alternate attendance). *Sankin kōtai* "required the lords of domains to live in Edo every other year with a large retinue of retainers prepared to do service to the bakufu in the form of guard duty, fire prevention, or

[20] Shiveley, "Buddahood," 135.

[21] Muromachi- and early Edo period fiction tended to be characterized by a powerful Buddhist didacticism. The woodblock-printed *Tamamo no sōshi* is dated 1653. This text retains a kind of Muromachi world view, and was likely recorded in the way it would have been received and propagated during that period.

participation in ceremony."[22] As many daimyo and their followers relocated to Edo year after year, the city grew rapidly. In 1630, the estimated population of Edo was near 500,000 people. By 1695, with the influx of merchants, artisans, and the daimyo families, the population almost doubled to 904,000.[23] It was during this period of growth, particularly influenced by the merchant and artisan influx, that Edo experienced a significant infusion of regional cultures in the form of dialects, fashion, and ideas. Edo had begun to surpass Kyoto and Osaka in population, which enhanced Edo's reputation and opened up opportunities for the exchange of ideas and commerce between people from different locales. Truly, Edo had become a crossroads of Japan.

One of the necessities for the promotion of commerce and communication between people traveling in and out of Edo was literacy. Although it is difficult to do more than speculate the actual numbers, Edo was known for its growing education and high literacy rates among different classes of people. Herbert Passin believes that about eighty percent of men and fifty percent of women were literate during the Edo period.[24] The government did not see literacy as a detriment to society, but rather as a way to increase effective commerce within a society that had grown enormously in population. The increase in demand for printed material meant that the merchants and artisans grew in prestige and wealth.

By the early-eighteenth century, the city of Edo experienced a flowering of interest in publication that eventually targeted not only a readership interested in mercantile commerce, but also a readership interested in the vibrant commoner and merchant culture that was blossoming

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[22] Luke Shepherd Roberts, *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins of Economic Nationalism in 18th-Century Tosa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 17.

[23] James L. McClain and John M. Merriman, "Edo and Paris: Cities and Power" in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1994), 13.

[24] Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1965), 57.

in Edo. By the late eighteenth century, publishing houses in Edo dwarfed those in both Osaka and Kyoto. Drawing upon research of the scholar Moriya Katsuhisa, Adam Kern states that

> during the eighteenth century, Kyoto declined to 536 publishers, while Osaka and Edo more or less reached parity, boasting 564 and 493 publishers, respectively. The nineteenth century witnessed the reduction of Kamigata into a shade of its former grandeur: while Kyoto declined to 494 publishers and Osaka to 504, Edo more than doubled, reaching 917 publishing houses.[25]

Kern further explains that by this time in the An'ei-Tenmei period,

> with even more people flocking to Edo from all over the country, the resultant intermixing of dialects and customs of members of various classes led to vibrant new cultural formations that were appreciably different than those of Kyōto-Osaka and other cultural regions of the country.[26]

Among the most popular of printed materials was the growing genre of popular literature called *gesaku* (frivolous works), which were published in a form known as *kusazōshi* (grass books), "characterized by their balanced assemblage of text and illustration."[27] By the mid-eighteenth century, the main representatives of the *kusazōshi* genre included such types of books as *akahon* (red books), *aohon* (blue books), *kurohon* (black books), and *kibyōshi* (yellow books). Whereas moralistic books had been prominent up until that time, the death of the shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune in 1751 opened up a world of free expression for Edo residents, which resulted in "the flowering of kabuki, prosperity in the pleasure quarters, the return of joruri singing [. . .] and the emergence of new comic genres like senryū and kyōka in poetry; dangibon, sharebon, and kibyōshi in prose fiction; and rakugo in storytelling."[28] This was the background

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[25] Adam L. Kern, *Manga From the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 33.

[26] Kern, *Manga From the Floating World*, 33.

[27] R. Keller Kimbrough, "Murasaki Shikibu for Children: The Illustrated *Shinpan Murasaki Shikibu* of ca. 1747," *Japanese Language and Literature* 40, no.1 (2006), 1.

[28] Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 451.

against which many authors felt unusually free to explore new and exciting themes in their writing.

Many *gesaku* authors entered into the literary fray during the mid to late-Edo period, but arguably one of the most famous of these was a man by the name of Santō Kyōden (1761-1816), the son of a pawnbroker in Edo. Throughout his writing career, he was known to compose an array of *gesaku* in the form of *kibyōshi*, *gōkan*, *sharebon*, and *yomihon*. He also wrote *kyōka* and illustrated *ukiyo-e*. By 1782 Kyōden was known as the most prominent *kibyōshi* author with such titles as *Edo umare uwaki no kabayaki (Grilled and Basted Edo-Born Playboy)* in 1785, and *Shingaku hayasomegusa (Shingaku: Quick-Staining Dye, Worker of Wonders)* in 1790. Kyōden also acquired many pupils, one of whom was the talented Kyokutei Bakin.[29]

Although Kyōden wrote many different forms of *gesaku*, his forte was the *kibyōshi*. *Kibyōshi* typically were ten pages in length, but some combined three volumes to equal roughly thirty pages. The content of *kibyōshi* was satiric, touching popular subjects that all people were interested in. Haruo Shirane states, "the kibyōshi shared the humor and wit of kyōka, senryū, kyōshi, and sharebon, which also prospered at this time. Although initially its subject matter was largely limited to the pleasure quarter, by the time the kibyōshi reached its creative peak in the 1780s, virtually no segment of society was spared its satiric treatment."[30]

THE BIRTH OF *GŌKAN*

However popular and socially important these works were to the public, the government eventually censored *kibyōshi* and other playful types of *gesaku*. Even though the government

[29] Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 655-656.

[30] Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 672.

initially saw no problem with the wide increase in literacy throughout the lower ranks of society, it eventually realized how influential the mass publishing of popular political satire could be. As Donald Shively points out, it is quite possible that the government felt some sort of "resentment over the luxuries enjoyed by upstart merchants" due to the gradual decline of their own positions in comparison.[31] Consequently, the shogunate kept a close eye on *gesaku* authors, creating cultural reforms to ban certain forms of literature when they deemed it necessary. At the point when *kibyōshi* and other forms of socially conscious *gesaku* were at their peaks, the shogunate decided to implement the Kansei Reforms (1787-1793), which was the second installment of government regulatory policies since the Kyōhō Reforms (1716-1736). As a part of the Kansei Reforms, the Shogunate issued a decree that "gorgeous and extravagant works were to be avoided," "no unorthodox theories were to be published," and "the publication of erotica should gradually be halted."[32] Kyōden was caught under these reforms in 1791 for writing a three-part *sharebon* called *Nishiki no ura (Behind the Brocade*) that dealt with intimate relations with courtesans, albeit not explicitly pornographic. His hands were shackled and he was committed to house arrest for fifty days as punishment. Of course, Kyōden was not the only one who received this kind of punishment for his literature, and many authors—Kyōden included—gave up writing in the playful style of the *kibyōshi* and *sharebon* and turned to other kinds of fiction to avoid government reprisal.[33]

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[31] Donald H. Shively, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1965): 126.

[32] Sarah E. Thompson and H.D. Harootunian, *Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorship and Japanese Prints* (New York: Asia Society, 1991), 59.

[33] Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 655-656.

The Floating World of frivolous and satirical writing was turned upside down, and in order to keep within the bounds of government-sanctioned literature, many authors and artists needed to turn their ideas into forms that were permissible and safe to experiment with. By the early nineteenth century, many authors were still depicting the actors and beautiful women of the Floating World in their works, but the tone had changed and a new form of expression was shaping the descriptions of these characters. Artists began to depict legendary heroes and heroines in warrior prints much more frequently than before, and writers focused more on the *yomihon,* or "reading book" style, to describe serious vendetta stories (*katakiuchimono*), sometimes also referred to as revenge pieces (*adauchimono*).

Eventually, a new form of these "serious" literary pursuits was termed *gōkan*, or "bound books." *Gōkan,* considered the last form of *kusazōshi*, bound together roughly five volumes of *kibyōshi* to hold a longer narrative. *Gōkan* novels were heavily influenced by Chinese literature and strongly linked to Confucian ideals taken from Chinese stories, giving the books a unique blend of China and Japan for the reader to enjoy.[34] Kern points out that because the *gōkan* succeeded the *kibyōshi*, there is significant overlap of style, making the genre a darker version of the *kibyōshi*.[35] *Gōkan* also tended to have much more text packed on the page than did the *kibyōshi*, making a "market for longer novels with more detailed plots" such as romances, historical accounts, and heroic warrior tales.[36] The *gōkan* began to dramatically increase in

[34] Donald Keene, *World Within Walls: Japanese Literature of the Pre-Modern Era, 1600-1867* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), 423-424.

[35] Kern, *Manga From the Floating World*, 240.

[36] William E. Deal, *Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan* (New York, NY: Facts On File, Inc, 2006), 258.

popularity from the early nineteenth century, and as long as the authors steered clear from writing about the pleasure quarters, any other form of voyeuristic or violent topic was permitted.

Some speculate that the turn from the sarcastic and amusing writings of *kibyōshi* to the *gōkan* was due to the oppressive nature of the times, and that "to the extent that the vendetta multivolume described a more heroic age—or at least provided a solid vehicle for symbolically working out social injustices—readers could forget the troubles of the present day."[37] This turn to the *gōkan* style may have been a way for authors to indirectly vent their frustrations toward the government without being sanctioned for it. These *gōkan* works, as well as many other pieces of art and literature, were often tales of vendettas (*katakiuchi*) that showcased prominent historical and folkloric figures as protagonists who symbolically fought against social injustice. It also provided the vehicle for Tamamo no mae's originally evil character to make a comeback into popular fiction, as she was cast as the main character in a vendetta tale.

Influences of Kabuki and the Supernatural in *Gōkan*

Vendetta tales were not the sole trend in popular literature during the early nineteenth century. The common Edo resident was also growing increasingly interested in the kabuki theater. Kabuki plays were definitely influenced by vendetta tales, and in turn, authors of fiction also began incorporating many kabuki-like plots, characters, and story progressions into their vendetta tales. Tsuruya Nanboku, the famous kabuki playwright, began to write in the *gōkan* style under the name of Uba Jōsuke 姥尉輔. He wrote his first vendetta tale in 1808, titled *Kinpira Gorisho: Katakiuchi Noriai-banashi* (*For Our Benefit from Kinpira: A Tale of Riding*

[37] Kern, *Manga From the Floating World*, 237.

Together on a Vendetta), and then began to incorporate these themes into his kabuki.[38] Kyōden also ended up following this trend, conversely adapting kabuki plays into the *gōkan* style. Shirane points out that

> the 1810s were the age of the kabuki playwright Tsuruya Nanboku, and Kyōden made Ichikawa Danjuro VII (the most popular kabuki actor in Nanboku's plays) the hero of a gōkan that included illustrations of the handsome actor and his costumes by the renowned ukiyo-e artist Utagawa Toyokuni. The female audience thus had a chance to see the actor on the covers (which were in color by the end of the 1810s) and follow the action through both words and pictures. The gōkan, which specialized in kabuki-type vendettas (*katakiuchi*) and struggles for house succession (*oie sōdō*), brought the world of the theater into the hands of the average reader. [39]

As Shirane explains, many of these "average readers" of kabuki-like literature turned out to be female fans of kabuki. Women became a very prominent audience for both drama and literary fiction during this period, as they tended to read more of this in comparison to either *waka* or *haikai* prose. In turn, authors of both kabuki theatre and kabuki-style literature began incorporating more female characters into their works, casting them in prominent roles. Shirane continues to explain that

> in the nineteenth century, when the audience for fiction expanded, two major genres of fiction, *gōkan* (bound picture books) and *ninjōbon* (books of sentiment and romance), catered to a largely female audience [. . .]. Of particular interest here is the fact that theater, kabuki, and jōruri, in which the difference in educational background was not so serious a handicap, were extremely popular among women in the Edo period. [40]

One of the ways kabuki responded to its growing female audience was by featuring main characters and villains as women. Certain types of strong female roles became particularly famous during that time, namely the *akuba* (evil woman) and *dokufu* (poisonous wife). The

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[38] Paul B. Kennelly, trans., "Ehon Gappō ga Tsuji: A Kabuki Drama of Unfettered Evil by Tsuruya Nanboku IV," *Asian Theatre Journal* 17, no. 2 (2000): 150.

[39] Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 800-801.

[40] Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 13.

stories and plays that feature these strong women typically focused on their feelings of betrayal by their lovers and their plots for revenge. An example is Oiwa in *Yotsuya Kaidan (Ghost Stories at Yotsuya)* written in 1825.[41]

The *akuba* in particular found its way into many different plays and literature and become a very popular cultural icon in the late Edo period. *Akuba* generally came from a lower class, sometimes from fallen nobility, and were "often obsessed with thoughts of revenge on someone who wronged them."[42] Samuel Leiter describes the *akuba* as follows:

> Plays featuring the *akuba*, especially those by Tsuruya Nanboku IV (1755-1829), reflected a growing tendency toward a theatricalized naturalism focused on the lives of society's outcasts, and her depiction represented a sharp move from idealization to gritty, if conventionalized, actualism; however, with an abundance of such roles, standardization set in and the *akuba* developed into yet another iconographic woman. Nevertheless, she represents a major step away from excessively feminized women of the past toward a potently independent character happy to demolish the stereotype of women as the victims of a suffocating patriarchy. And she was not simply a theatrical fiction, as there were a number of actual women who closely fit the description.[43]

Paul Kennelly also states that, in the case of *akuba*, "all of the plays elevated members of the lower class to principal characters--consistent with Nanboku's interest in the rising genre of *kizewamono* (raw-life plays), which stressed the bitter privations of Edo's substrata."[44]

TAMAMO NO MAE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: SANTŌ KYŌDEN'S *ITO GURUMA KYUBI NO KITSUNE*

[41] Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 14.

[42] Samuel L. Leiter, *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 226.

[43] Leiter, *A Kabuki Reader*, 226.

[44] Kennelly, "Ehon Gappo ga Tsuji," 151.

This cultural interest in strong and evil women provided the perfect impetus for Kyōden to revive the original evil character of Tamamo no mae and insert her into one of his vendetta novels. It was in the rapidly changing social order of the early nineteenth century that Tamamo no mae began to appear in *kusazōshi,* as well as in *jōruri*, *nagauta* (long songs), and kabuki theater.[45] It was also the time when Kyōden decided to write *Ito guruma kyūbi no kitsune*—a vendetta tale showcasing a number of characters from Japanese legends and folklore, with the most identifiable one being Tamamo no mae. Due to the interest in evil female characters, Kyōden drew upon her originally evil character because most Japanese audiences would be familiar with her. She had already made an appearance in other famous works at roughly the same time, the most well-known one being Tamayama Okuda's *Ehon tamamo no tan* in 1804. Kyōden apparently drew upon much of this story, the characters, and the pictures from this novel, and used it to re-create his own version in *Ito guruma kyūbi no kitsune.*[46] To make his work even more unique, Kyōden also incorporated the famous tale of *Adachi ga hara* 安達が原 into his work, showcasing an evil hag from the story. In *Ito guruma kyūbi no kitsune,* Kyōden has the hag combine forces with Tamamo no mae, thus cleverly meshing the two stories together. With the large female audiences who tended to be intrigued by strong and evil women characters in kabuki, namely the *akuba,* Kyōden must have assumed that this novel would be successful.

The beginning of *Ito guruma kyūbi no kitsune* is set in the familiar Nasuno plains where Tamamo no mae's spirit still rests in the Sesshōseki (killing stone), the same motif that was introduced in the Muromachi period *otogizōshi*. Whereas the 1657 *Tamamo no sōshi* ends with a

[45] "Sesshōseki," in *Nihon denki densetsu dai jiten* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1986), 507-508.

[46] Satō Satoru, "Santō Kyōden no bungaku to egaku—'Itoguruma kyūbi no kitsune' to 'Ehon tamamo no tan'," *Kokubungaku rikai to kanshō* 73, no.12 (2008), 108.

typical Buddhist twist in which Tamamo no mae accepts Buddhism and attains enlightenment, Kyōden, in this late-Edo adaptation of the tale, changes both the persona of Tamamo no mae and the progression of the story. Because vendetta tales were extremely popular during the late-Edo period, Kyōden essentially overlooked the Buddhist ending of *Tamamo no sōshi* and instead changed Tamamo no mae back to her old conniving persona. She is now portrayed as a vengeful spirit bent on the destruction of the Miura clan, who were descendants of the warrior who shot her dead on the Nasuno plain. She meets up with the hag from *Adachi ga hara* in the beginning of the story and makes a pact to destroy the Miura clan together.

Conclusion: Folktales and Legends Reflect Their Times

The rise of this amalgam of familiar folklore, evil women characters, and vendettas served as the perfect motivation for Kyōden to revive the originally evil persona of Tamamo no mae and present it to an audience intrigued by different aspects of Buddhist rhetoric, and in the dramatic and supernatural elements that had come to be so prominent in the Edo period. Furthermore, the popular theater, fictional trends, the air of uncertainty in the early nineteenth century, and the many frustrations that authors had to endure, further impacted Kyōden in his literary pursuits, which in turn influenced the evolution of Tamamo no mae's tale.

Whereas Tamamo no mae serves as just one example of how folktales and legends change throughout time, there are a plethora of examples of stories, characters and legends in Japanese folklore that evolve throughout the ages. The evolution of such mythical creatures as the *kappa* and *oni* are examples of beings in ancient Japanese folklore that came about for various purposes and reasons, but changed to meet the needs of modern Japan. The *kappa*, traditionally thought to be mischievous and evil creatures responsible for stealing horses and

worse, were feared and avoided in ancient Japan. Today, however, many small rural villages and towns have capitalized on the image of the *kappa*, and transformed them into cute mascots to lure tourists into their towns. There is now a full-length anime film created about this cute *kappa*.[47] The *oni*, traditionally depicted as man-eating demons, are now sometimes depicted as cute and sexy female figures in various anime programs.[48]

Whatever the example, it is clear that these characters were created and shaped to suit specific needs of different time periods. The character figure of Tamamo no mae reflects different historical periods—from the radically Buddhist tenor of the Muromachi and early Edo periods to the more secular tenor of the mid-to-late Edo period. What is of the most interest, however, is that although history continues to progress, the characters of these folktales remain somewhat constant or iconic—a creation to express one's thoughts or sentiments that can be molded and re-molded depending on the aim of its user. In this sense, although the characters' appearance and personality may change, the iconic figure is immortal. Tamamo no mae spanned these two worlds in classical Japanese history, and continues to be represented in the present through video games, manga, art, and short fiction as a sexually attractive female figure who holds the supernatural powers of a nine-tailed fox. It is hard to say how she will be portrayed in the future, but the name Tamamo no mae will long be remembered in the minds of many Japanese.

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[47] Michael Dylan Foster, "The Metamorphosis of the Kappa: Transformation of Folklore to Folklorism in Japan," *Asian Folklore Studies* 57, no.1 (1998): 1-24.

[48] Noriko T. Reider, "Transformation of the Oni: From the Frightening and Diabolical to the Cute and Sexy," *Asian Folklore Studies* 62, no.1 (2003): 133-157.

CHAPTER II

TRANSLATION[49]

[Cover]

THE ADACHI FIELDS (ADACHI GA HARA)

THE NASUNO FIELDS (NASUNO NO HARA)

THE SPINNING WHEEL AND THE NINE-TAILED FOX (ITOGURUMA KYUBI NO KITSUNE)—NINE PARTS

Written by Seiseisai Kyōden, Illustrations by Ichiōsai Toyokuni

Illustration of Dakki—the beloved of Emperor Chu of the Yin dynasty

[49] Scanned pictures of the original *gōkan* titled *Itoguruma kyūbi no kitsune* were obtained from the Waseda University library online archives. The modern typeset edition of *Itoguruma kyūbi no kitsune* is found in volume six of the *Santō kyōden zenshū*.

[page 1]

PREFACE

Legend has it that during the Kyūju era, Emperor Konoe's favorite consort Tamamo no mae changed into a fox and died on the plains of Nasuno in the Eastern province, where its spirit transformed into a stone. It was during the reign of Emperor Gofukakusa in the Hōji era that the priest Gennō pacified that stone. Thus, there is an approximate ninety-year period from the Kyūju to the Hōji era. In this non-official history novel, the phantom fox once again possesses the body of an elderly woman during the Hōji period, causing much misfortune. The novel also incorporates the ghost story of Adachi ga hara as an addendum to the story. In actuality, this resembles a *kyōgen* play made to console women and children in their boredom.

Santō Kyōden

Manuscript completed in the fifth month of 1807

Published on New Year 's Day of 1808

Published by Yohachi

Eijūdō Nishimura Publishing House

Bakuro chō, ni chōme

[page 2]

The enchantress Tamamo no mae

[page 3]

The nine-tailed phantom fox with a pale face and golden fur

[page 4]

Kokimi—daughter

Kyodō—the firstborn child

Sodehagi—the wife of Tamanawa Ikoma no suke,

[page 5]

Miura no Tarō Mitsumura

[page 6]

PART ONE

During the reign of the eighty-eighth human sovereign Gofukakusa, in what seems to have been the Hōji era, there was a homeless outcast called the ‘Viper Hag’ who lived on the plains of Nasuno of Shimotsuke province.[50] She was an old woman who begged for money with her pet snakes. One day, having grown tired of begging, she sat down on top of a wooden grave tablet

[50] Shimotsuke province—also called Shimotsuke shū or Yashū—is now known as Tochigi Prefecture, and comprises roughly the same territory as Shimotsuke.

near the killing stone.[51] She dozed off for a while, and in her dream the killing stone split into two. A beautiful noblewoman wearing a robe of five twilled silks and a scarlet trouser skirt emerged from the stone, and spoke:

"I am the ghost of the nine-tailed fox of golden fur who has traveled the three countries of China, India, and Japan. In India I appeared as Lady Kayō, in China I appeared as Yin Dakki, and in this land I am known as Tamamo no mae. Unable to fulfill my desires, I died on this plain during the former era of Kyūju. Although my body perished, my spirit lodged in this stone. Even now my resentment continues to fester. Because Miura no Zenji Yasumura of present-day Kamakura is the descendent of Miura no suke Yoshiakira—the man who shot and killed me with a single arrow—I intend to destroy the Yasumura family and dispel my long-standing grudge. Having observed your unmatched boldness, I will enter into your chest. Lend me your body for a while!"

Having spoken thus, the noblewoman immediately transformed into a nine-tailed fox and looked as if it was going to jump into the hag's chest. The hag awoke from the dream, startled by the ringing of a nearby prairie temple bell mixed with the sound of the strong autumn wind blowing from the plains. This is the beginning of our tale.

[Captions]

FOX: "I will enter into your chest and, following in your shadow, will hope to repay this grudge. Please, lend me your body!"

[51] The killing stone is a relic in Tochigi prefecture. It is known for emitting poisonous gasses that have killed small birds and animals. According to legend, it is said that the spirit of Tamamo no mae entered into the rock and made it this way.

HAG: “So, you are the ghost of the nine-tailed fox of golden fur, the famous Tamamo no mae? This is fortunate, because I too have a desire. If the body of a beggar hag like me would be of use to you, I’ll gladly comply.”

[page 7]

Around that time there was a close retainer of the Kamakura military commander Lord Yoritsune, whoo was named Master Miura no Zenji Yasumura. Yasumura was the son of his father's mistress. He heard that his birth mother, a woman named Akigiri, was roaming through the eastern provinces. He wanted desperately to find her, take her back to his manor to care for her, and fulfill his filial duty by comforting her in her old age. Thinking this, he sent his trusted vassal, an old man named Tamanawa Gunki, to search for her in the eastern provinces. But despite her being his real mother, Yasumura was unable to recognize her face since he was only two or three years old when he was separated from her. The only evidence of her identity was the

Munechika[52] short sword that Yasumura's father Yoshimura gave her when he sent her away. Therefore, Gunki was instructed to ask for the sword as proof. Yasumura heard that she had been reduced to poverty, so he assumed she must be living in distress. If Gunki were to find her, he was instructed to provide her with clothes and other necessities and return to the manor with her. For that reason, Yoshimura provided him with one hundred *ryō* in gold and some additional money needed for travel. Gunki speedily departed Kamakura and first searched throughout the provinces of Musashi and Shimō. He then reached Hitachi province, and finally moved on to Shimotsuke, hopelessly searching here and there.

[Captions]

Yasumura's wife Lady Shikitae

Miura no Zenji Yasumura

Yasumura's daughter Yaehatahime

○Yasumura's adopted son, Mitsumura, marries Yaehatahime. Shortly after that, they bear a son named Yatsuwaka.

YASUMURA: "Set out quickly and find her! Since she must be an old woman by now, I want to tend to her while she is still alive."

GUNKI: "That is a commendable idea, my Lord. I completely understand."

[52] Munechika was a renowned swordsmith who lived during the Muromachi period. He inscribed his name, Munechika 宗近, into many of his swords.

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At long last, Gunki found the dwelling of Akigiri in a place called Muro no Yashima in Shimotsuke province. However, Akigiri was already an old woman of over eighty years with no one to care for her. She managed to support her precarious life by gleaning fallen ears of rice and picking fruit. With a disheveled pile of bracken and a straw mat she endured the cold nights. Although she had fallen into such poverty, she thought that if she were to announce herself in Kamakura, it would be humiliating for her son Lord Yasumura. Thus she had been living in this squalor. But now that she was dangerously ill and suffering from old age, she met with Gunki without reservation and heard all of the particulars concerning Yasumura's offer. Struck by her

son's filial devotion, she brought out the short sword. She entrusted it to Gunki and asked him to give it to Yasumura as a memento. Finally, Akigiri died.

[Captions]

Miura Yasumura's birth mother, Akigiri, in her last moments.

AKIGIRI: "This Munechika short sword was a gift from my former Lord, Yoshimura. Please bring it back to Lord Yasumura and tell him to look on it as a keepsake of me."

GUNKI: "After finally finding you this was all in vain! To be so ill now that I have found you! Indeed, the bond between parent and child is weak. When I tell my Lord about your circumstances, oh how he will be grieved!"

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PART TWO

And thus, Tamanawa Gunki wept and wept. After he took Akigiri's corpse and carefully buried it, he clutched the Munechika short sword and, intending to hurry back to Kamakura, set out through the Nasuno plains. Having listened closely to Gunki and Akigiri's conversation through a fence, the viper hag had followed him into the fields. She drew a sword that she fit into her cane, crept up from behind and slashed him. But being a skilled swordsman, Gunki drew his sword as he was attacked and began to fight. His heart was racing, but being an old man, he grew weak from the first deep cut and was thus reduced to defending himself. The viper hag pressed on, struck him to the ground and finally delivered a fatal blow. She then snatched up the short sword with the rest of Gunki's money and departed.

[Captions]

HAG: "Hand over that short sword!"

GUNKI: You bandit hag!"

[Page 10]

One day Lady Shikitae, the wife of Miura no zenji Yasumura, was on her way to visit the Hachiman Shrine in Tsurugaoka. A suspicious looking beggar woman who was wearing an old straw raincoat that hung over her tattered rags and clinging tightly to a bamboo cane approached her carriage. Lady Shikitae's samurai guards reprimanded her, saying: "You filthy hag, if you're here to beg then step back!"

She glanced at them and said: "You all have no idea what you are talking about. I have business with Lady Shikitae. I won't have any of you glaring at me like that!"

"You outrageous witch!" barked the agitated samurai. "If you don't back off we'll make you show us a little hip!"

From within her carriage, Lady Shikitae spoke: "What a commotion! Restrain yourself for a moment." Rebuking the guard, she opened the door of her carriage. She asked the beggar: "So, old woman, what business do you have with me?"

The beggar drew close to the carriage and spoke: "You really are Lady Shikitae, aren't you? I am the one they call Akigiri who gave birth to Lord Yasumura. But I have fallen in the world and am ashamed of my present appearance. You may doubt my words, but here, look at this."

The old woman pulled out the short sword from a brocade bag. Lady Shikitae examined it carefully and realized that it was indeed the blade that her husband had spoken so much about—the famous creation of the swordsmith Munechika.

"So you are Lady Akigiri?" she said. "What an unexpected meeting! I had heard that you had come down in the world, but I did not think that it was this bad. Lord Yasumura is in the middle of searching for you, so he will surely be elated to see you. Come, come!"

She had Akigiri take off her rags and put on a narrow-sleeved kimono. After helping her into the carriage, they set off to the manor together.

[Captions]

○This old woman is actually the viper hag. The nine-tailed fox has entered into her chest, and as her shadow, follows her around doing evil.

Yasumura's wife as she visits the Tsurugaoka Shrine.

HAG: "None of you know what you are talking about! Get out of the way and let me through!"

SAMURAI: "Blabbering old hag! Step back, step back!"

[Page 11]

Being entirely unaware that the old woman was a fraud, Lady Shikitae accompanied her back to the manor and told her husband what had happened. Yasumura was overjoyed. Since he was only two or three years old when he was separated from her, he did not recognize his mother.

But considering that she was about the same age, and she had the evidentiary short sword, he had no reason to doubt.

"I ordered one of my retainers, Tamanawa Gunki, to search for you" said Lord Yasumura. To this she wept and replied: "No, I never encountered that man. But in my profound longing for you, I abandoned my pride and came here."

She sounded so convincing that Yasumura was even more delighted. Thinking that it was terribly unfilial to have neglected his mother who had such a short time to live, and wanting to at least provide comfort for her in her old age, he carefully constructed a separate living space and assigned many female servants to tend to her needs. He entertained her with delicacies of the land and sea, with music of the *biwa*, *koto*, and *tsuzumi*, and with games of incense[53] and shell[54] matching. But even with all this, the old woman was not pleased.

"Rather than making me sick from all this inedible food from 'coming-of-age' ceremonies and whatnot, I'd rather have some tasty shad skewers[55] and cloudy sake. What's more, these robes are like the ones you see lying around at temples. My body is so cramped that I can't do anything! And you can quit all of that incense and aloeswood nonsense—that unbearable stench is giving me a splitting headache. What would cheer me up is if I could have

[53] An assortment of incenses used in a game known as *jishukō* 十種香, or ten varieties of fragrance. Players took turns smelling various incenses and trying to match the fragrance to one of ten options placed in front of them.

[54] A famous pastime called *kai awase* 貝合わせ, or shell-matching. Much like modern-day *karuta*, players had to match a pair of shell halves that had the same picture or poem written on them.

[55] Shad, or *konoshiro* コノシロ, is a type of fish that smells terrible when cooked, and is therefore typically served pickled instead. An alternate way to write this word is 此の城, which means "this castle", so the phrase to "cook shad" or, "*konoshiro wo yaku* 此の城を焼く", was superstitiously avoided due to the allusion of burning down one's castle. Thus, the nobility and warrior families avoided eating the fish. It is telling that the Viper Hag would use this word as an allusion to the destruction of the Miura clan.

my trusty spinning wheel. I have worked for so long that just sitting around here doing nothing is going to make me sick. Go get me a wheel!"

On her gold-gilded two-mat platform, concealed by bamboo blinds, she slipped off half of her light twill robe and exposed one side of her emaciated body. Biting down on a pipe, she hissed a tune from the country from the space between her teeth:

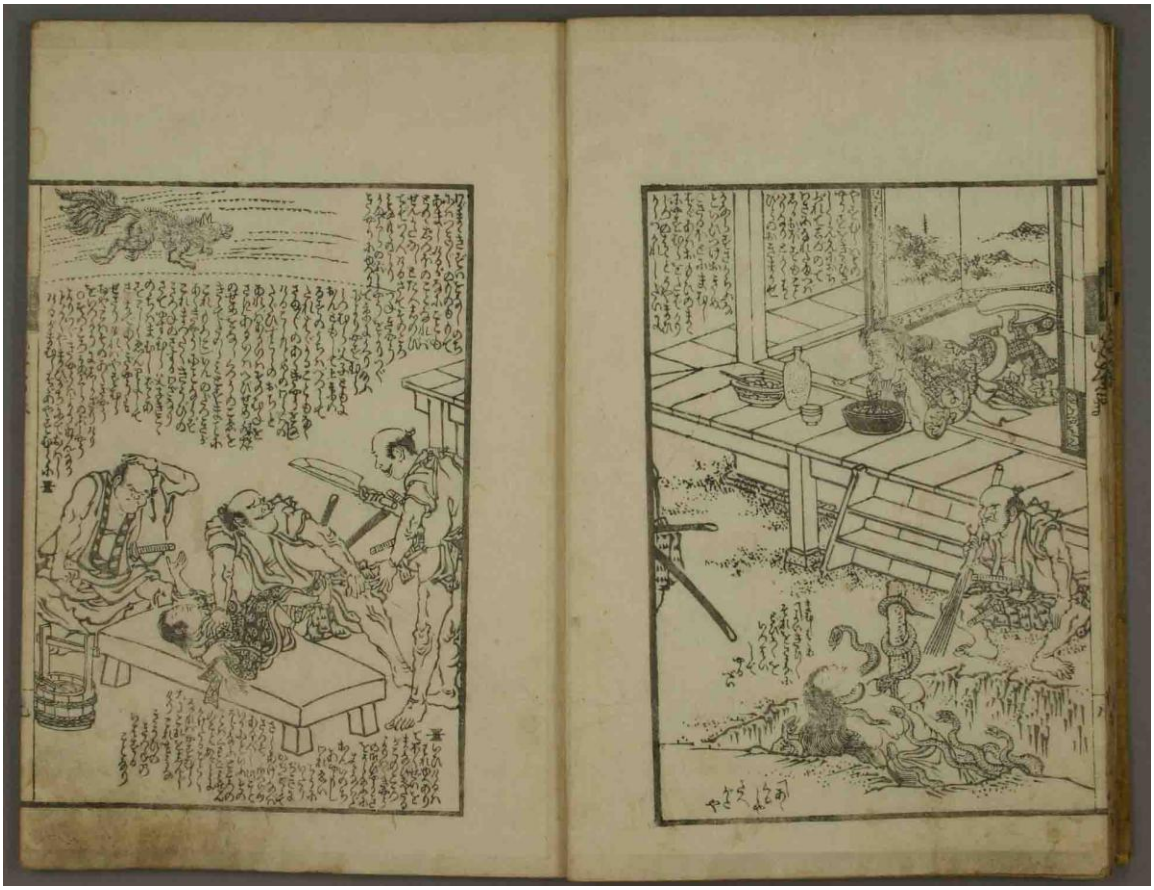
"My eyelids won't shut on the night my love doesn't come. I have thrown my life into the depths of my tears."

Singing this, she spun the wheel over and over, making a whirring noise. Her servants had to conceal their laughter as they tended to her.

[Captions]

SERVANTS: Your dinner is ready now. We think it would be best if you ate.

VIPER HAG: Quit yakking my ear off you noisy harpies!



[Page 12]

Hearing about this, Yasumura said to the servants: “She has long since fallen into the world of commoners. Considering she is used to the handiwork of lowly people, it’s reasonable that she should think this way. In any case, leave her to do as she wishes and do not defy her, no matter what.”

Before long the Viper Hag had tricked Yasumura just as she had planned, making him respect and care for her like his real mother. Eventually she was able to do whatever she pleased. Later, her servants found her more than they could handle, but since she was the birth mother of their lord, they had no choice but to endure and continue attending to her.

Now at that time Lord Minamoto no Yoritsune passed the title of Kamakura military commander to Lord Yoritsugu and set out on his return to the capital. Yasumura and his son Mitsumura accompanied him on his way. While they traveled toward the capital, the Viper Hag, unafraid of anyone, did many evil deeds. For even the slightest fault, she took her young servant girls and would split open their chests, torture them with snakes, drown, or torment them with water and fire. She reveled in hearing their cries of pain. Indeed, this was no different than the evil acts of Yin Dakki in China—it was entirely the work of the nine-tailed fox. When Lord Yasumura and his son returned, the Viper Hag restrained herself and ceased the atrocities. Thus, Yasumura and his son had no idea of her evildoing.

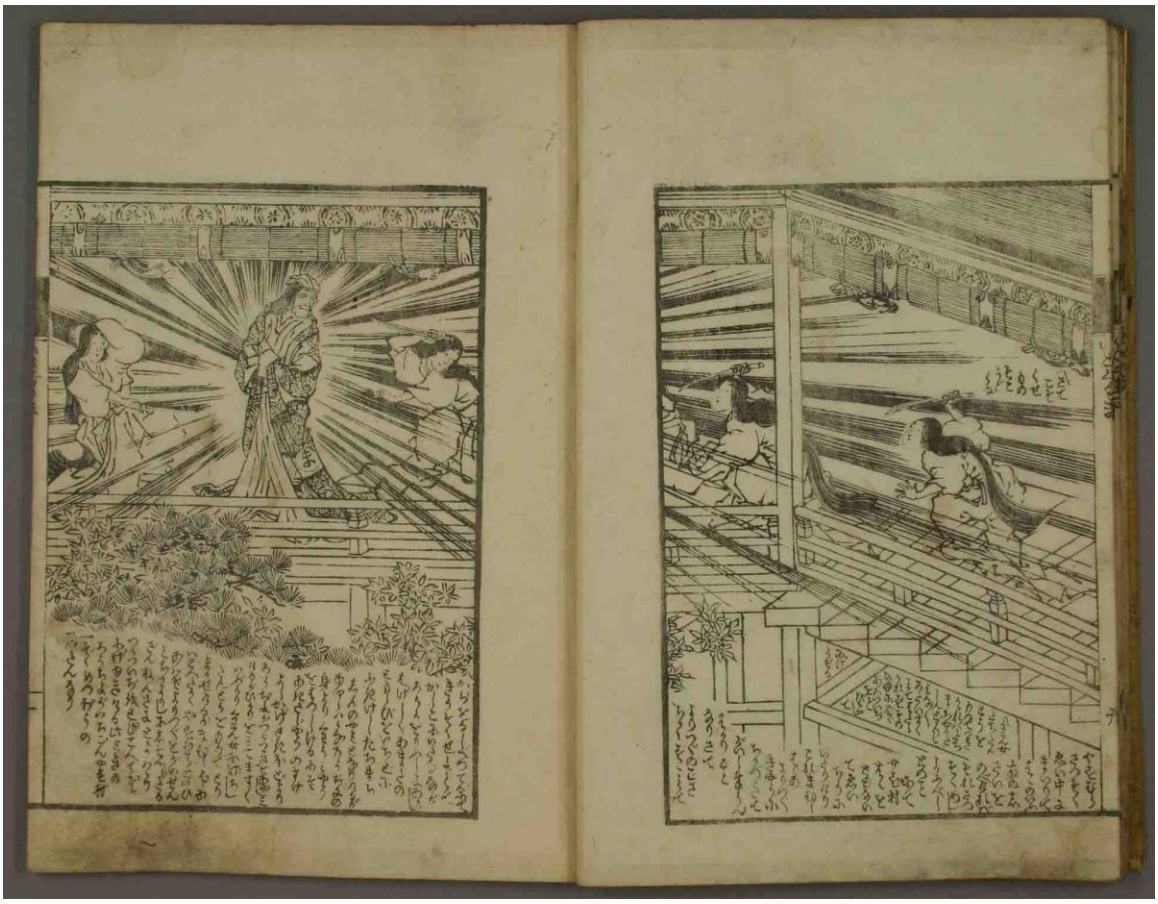
At that time the new Kamakura military commander, Lord Yoritsugu, was only a young child who tended to be ill all the time. The viper hag spoke to Yasumura, saying: "I have previously learned the art of divination for my own reasons.[56] I have recently divined Lord Yoritsugu's illness and found that his life is in terrible danger. If I were to go to his castle and immediately offer an incantation on his behalf, he should quickly recover. What do you think of this?" She told him of her divination, showing him all things past and present as if Yasumura was looking into a mirror. Yasumura completely fell for her tricks. Everything she said was through the power of the nine-tailed fox.

[Captions]

VIPER HAG: Tasty tasty! I'll nibble on that and drink a cupful of sake for you!

SERVANT: Oh, it hurts! It's unbearable!

[56] The word *bokuzei* 卜筮 is used here to mean divination through either burning turtle shells (*kiboku* 亀卜) or using a small bamboo pole called a *medoki* 筮竹. This form of divination was popular throughout ancient China.



[Page 13]

Lord Yasumura quickly went to the castle and told everyone about his mother's offer. They decided that she should be called in at once, so Yasumura accompanied her to the palace. This was the Viper Hag's plan: to get close to Lord Yoritsugu and kill him.

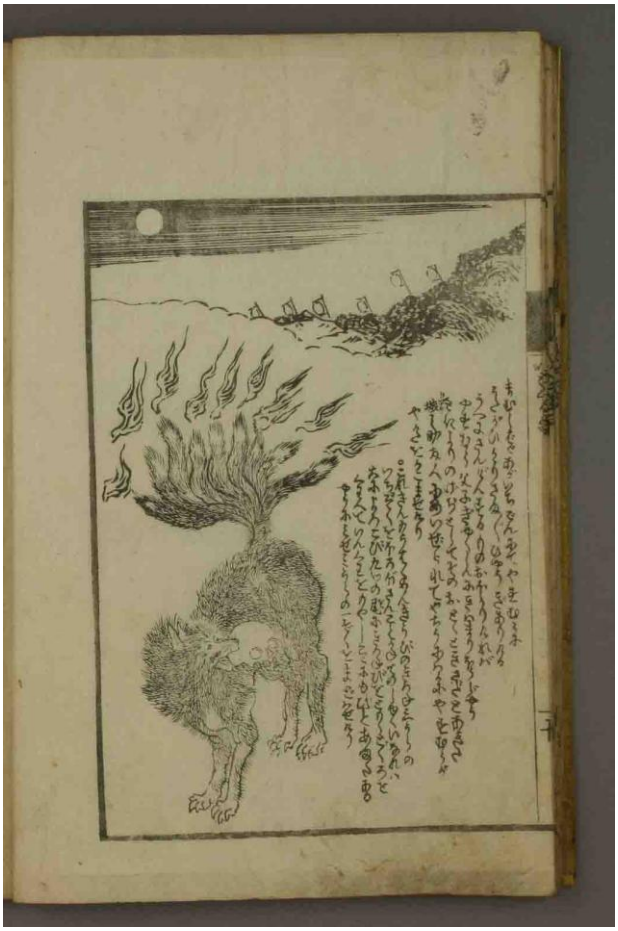
She approached the seat of Lord Yoritsugu, performed an incantation and instructed him to go to an adjacent part of the castle to rest. Just as they were traveling down the long hallway that led there, the winds of a violent evening storm blew out all of the torch flames and instantly left them in complete darkness. But how mysterious—the old woman emitted rays of light from

her body! Akita Jōnosuke Yoshikage had already thought that she seemed strange, but seeing this light aroused his suspicion even more. He commanded the court women to take their short swords and surround her, but the Viper Hag shouted out to them in a loud voice: "I plotted this with Lord Yasumura so I could get close enough to kill Yoritsugu. How unfortunate that I have failed!" Saying this, she flew over the tile-roofed wall and escaped. The old woman's words would be the beginning of the Yasumura clan's destruction.

[Captions]

The court women clutched their short swords and rushed to stab her, but suddenly the mansion shook, leaving everyone startled and unable to move at all. Right then the hag flew over the tile-roofed wall and disappeared.

COURT WOMEN: All right you knave, don't move!



[Page 14]

The Viper Hag's words aroused a great deal of suspicion about Yasumura. After much deliberation on the many accounts of slander against Yasumura, he and his son were accused of treason. By order of Hōjō Tokiyori, his younger brother Tokisada and Akita Jōnosuke were to immediately surround the Yasumura manor in the middle of the night.

○ This is the nine-tailed phantom fox with a pale face and golden fur. It is overjoyed because it had long-awaited the destruction of the Miura clan. It emits fox-flames from each of its nine tails, holds a skull in its mouth and burns a ghostly fire. This makes it seem as if there are many people coming, therefore deceiving the Miura clan.

PART THREE

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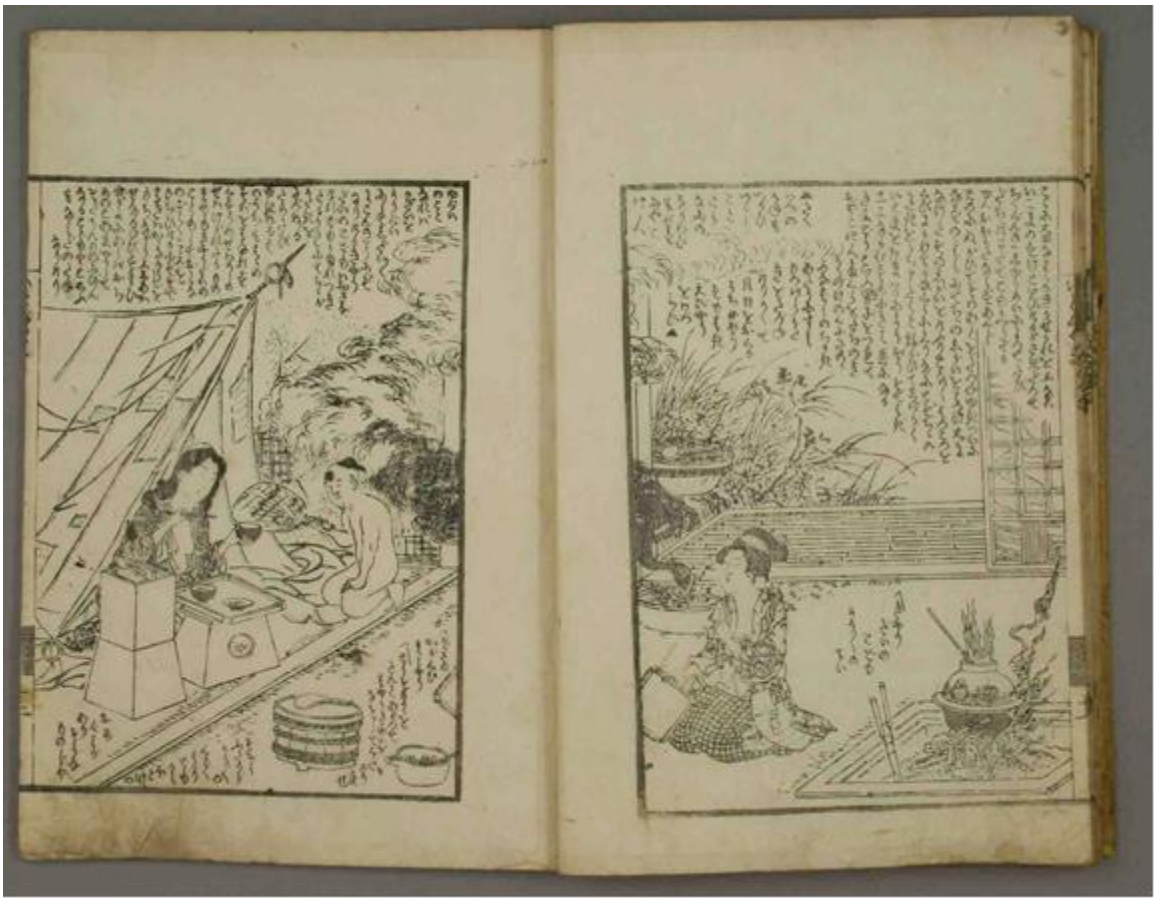
And thus, both Tokisada and Jōnosuke arrived at the castle of Lord Miura no zenji Yasumura bringing a great number of followers with them. Obeying the strict order of Lord Yoritsugu, they bound Yasumura with all of his family and retainers, and then dragged them back to Yoritsugu. This was truly a strange and false charge, but considering the Viper Hag's statement and the many accusations of slander, it was difficult for Yasumura to explain himself. Also thinking that it would be disloyal to oppose his lord, Yasumura shamefully allowed himself to be tied up and taken away.

Yasumura then turned to his wife Lady Shikitae in tears and said: “For the time being, I want you to flee the manor and raise Yatsuwaka up while I’m gone. Bide your time until you can prove my innocence and then restore our family line.”

“I cannot bear to be separated from you. Let us both be taken and die in the same place!” said his wife as she choked on her sad tears. Yasumura replied: “If that is the case, then who will restore our family?” Having no other choice, Lady Shikitae accompanied her daughter Yaehatahime and had her wet nurse Kashiwagi cradle her grandson Yatsuwaka as they fled the manor in tears. Only later would they find out that this would be their final parting of husband and wife, parent and child.

[Captions]

KASHIWAGI: Your feet must hurt.



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Tamanawa Ikomanosuke, the son of Tamanawa Gunki, was also living in this place. His father Gunki had been ordered to leave on a journey, but a very long time had passed and he had not yet returned. Worrying that this was not normal, Ikomanosuke asked his Lord for permission to search for his father's whereabouts. At last he found his father's body in the plains of Nasuno and grieved bitterly. He burned the body to smoke, hung the white bones around his neck and returned to Kamakura. He asked to get revenge on his father's killer, so his Lord granted him leave for a while. He then brought his wife Sodehagi, his eleven-year-old daughter Kogimi and

his five-year-old son Kyodō out of Kamakura. The four of them settled in Kōzuke province[57]near a boat bridge in Sano.[58] Here, Ikomanosuke devoted himself solely to finding his father's killer.

As the days passed in this manner, his wife Sodehagi became seriously ill and used up their savings. Having not taken up any profession herself, and seeing that the four of them needed to eat, she sold all of her belongings to survive and gradually fell into poverty. The two children were young, but naturally filial, so they took over in their father's absence and never moved from their mother's side. They took care of her medicine, meals, and even her dirty messes. Even though they were children, the two of them behaved as though they were adults!

Seeing their filial devotion in such humble circumstances, Sodehagi realized that in normal circumstances they would be the ones pampered and raised by maids and wet nurses! Oh what pitiful children! Thinking this made her feel like weeping.

[Captions]

The two children showing their filial devotion.

KYODŌ: Mother, let's eat these mosquitos.

KOGIMI: Please eat a lot of this rice. May this help to bring back your spirit!

SODEHAGI: All these filial deeds will surely bring the two of you blessings from the Gods and Buddhas!

[57] Kōzuke province—also called jōshū or jōmō—is now known as Gunma Prefecture, and comprises roughly the same territory as Kōzuke did.

[58] The reference to Sanō no funabashi 佐野の船橋 is also included in the *Manyōshū* 万葉集 (14:3420) as a pillow word to express longing and separation.

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Could even the heavens have been touched by the two children's filial devotion, so far beyond their years? Sodehagi steadily recovered from her illness, but she injured her back and even standing and sitting became difficult.

Meanwhile, Ikomanosuke heard rumors that his lord had received an unwarranted punishment in Kamakura and that his family and all of his retainers had been apprehended. He said to his wife: "I know it is an important cause for me to slay my father's killer, but it cannot take the place of my lord's serious affair. I intend to go quickly to Kamakura and free him from captivity. If I fail, I will accompany him into the afterworld. For your part, you should recover and take care of yourself, then bring up our two children to avenge the killer of my father Gunki!

This lone scroll that had fallen next to my father's corpse contains the lineage of the late Hōjō Mitsutoki who was exiled to Izu province. Because we have this, I have no doubt that our enemy has some connection to Mitsutoki. Use this to find the murderer!" He handed the scroll to her and cut off a tuft of hair from his temple. He left this and told her to keep it as a memento of him. "I inherited this armor and halberd from my father, but I want you to sell it and stave off your poverty." He said goodbye and began to leave. Kyōdo clung to his left sleeve and said: "Father, where are you going? Don't leave when mother is in such a bad condition!" Kogimi clung to his right sleeve and sobbed, refusing to let him go or separate from him.

His courage began to weaken. He had heard that parents and children are only together for one lifetime, and so even if they were to wait for him, the chance of reuniting was slim. Since this would be the last time he would see their faces, he grew more despondent and tried his hardest to hide the tears rolling down his face. Because of her faithfulness as a samurai wife, rather than trying to hold back her husband who would not be stopped from going off to die, she put away her growing feelings and wept secretly so that her children would not see it.

Ikomanosuke gathered himself together. "It's disloyal to waste time!" he said. He thrust his two children aside and bruskly went out. Having been left behind, the three of them burst into tears. The sound of their voices could be heard from a hundred meters away. Their hearts were drawn to him as they watched their beloved father walk away.

[Captions]

KOGIMI: Father, don't go anywhere!

KYŌDO: I'll go together with you!

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Lady Shikitae accompanied her daughter Yaehatahime with her wet nurse Kashiwagi, who was carrying her grandson Yatsuwaka, and all fled the manor. They hid for about ten days in the house of a fisherman from the Koyurugi shore.[59] However, someone reported to them that their whereabouts had quickly leaked to Hōjō Tokisada. For this reason, they could not stay any longer, so they all fled toward Kanazawa under the cover of night. On the way, their pursuers surrounded them. Lady Shikitae set Yaehatahime and Kashiwagi off ahead as she swung a

59 Koyurugi 小余綾 is the name of the seashore in Kanagawa prefecture stretching from the town of Ōiso to Kōzu in the city of Odahara. A reference to Koyurugi no iso 小余綾の磯 appears in poems of both the *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集 (852, 1224) and the *Mandai wakashū* 万代和歌集 (2769) as a pillow word to express a sense of urgency or hurry.

halberd about and faced the crowd of assailants. Exhausting all of her secret tactics, she sent sparks flying as she battled. It was difficult for any of the rough men to compete with her. In the way the spring rain ruins the flowers, or the autumn wind scatters the leaves, the group dispersed all at once.

Lady Shikitae was exhausted from her battle. As soon as she drew a long breath, the mountain temple bell rang out. She counted the peals and realized that it was already the ninth hour. Just then a rain cloud covered the moon and left the sky dark as if it were the dead of night. She wondered what had become of Yaehatahime and Kashiwagi, so she leaned upon her halberd and called out to them, saying: “Yaehata, where are you? Kashiwagi, where are you?” She searched here and there, but could not find them.

Elsewhere, Kashiwagi clutched Yatsuwaka to her chest and pulled Yaehatahime by the hand as they fled further away. Kashiwagi could not stop worrying about her lady’s predicament, so she stopped running any farther ahead. But because she could hear the voices of her pursuers behind her, she could not go back to see if her lady was safe or not. They all wandered around in one place, and as they did, unknowingly passed by Lady Shikitae. The distance between them grew further and further until it was impossible for them to find each other. All they could do was worry about each other, causing them terrible grief.

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Also during this time, Miura no Tarō Mitsumura, the son-in-law of Miura no zenji Yasumura, was away from home visiting the Atsuta Shrine in Owari province.[60] On his way home he was greatly surprised by the commotion at the manor. Mitsumura ordered his retainers to follow him as he raced home on his horse. As he listened into the situation, he heard that his father-in-law Yasumura and all of his family and retainers had been taken captive. This left him speechless. Mitsumura was actually the younger brother of Akita Jōnosuke, which meant that he had now become enemies with his own brother. Listening closely, he learned that they were

[60] Owari province—sometimes called Bishū—is located in the western part of present day Aichi Prefecture.

being held in the Lotus Temple Hall. He began to make his way there and wondered about his fate.

As he wrapped the reigns around his hand and urged his horse forward, he heard two women's voices saying: "Hey mother!" and "Hey madam, madam!" Seeing someone approaching him in the moonlight, he realized it was his wife Yaehatahime and her wet nurse Kashiwagi, carrying his son Yatsuwaka in her arms. As soon as Yaehatahime saw Mitsumura, she wept and said: "Oh how glad we are to find you in such a good place, my lord! I heard that my father has been commanded to cut open his stomach in the Lotus Hall. I beg of you to please take us to that place and kill us too! Tonight I fled with my mother from our hideout on the Koyurugi shore. But along the way, pursuers on the road surrounded her and I lost her in the dark night. Now I do not know where she is—perhaps she has been taken captive! How can I bear to be separated from my father and mother for even one day!"

Mitsumura was astonished to hear that her mother was missing. He replied to her, saying: "Yes, but because we still do not know if she is dead or alive, you should go on living and search for her. But especially since you have the boy Yatsuwaka here, you need to hide somewhere, raise him, and wait until you can once again restore our family name. As for you, Kashiwagi, I am counting on you for this—please help take care of Yaehata and my son! Come what may, I intend to meet my end with your father, so I cannot waste time in this place. It would be shameful if you too were to be taken captive while dawdling around here. Hurry and flee!"

Although he spoke such things, his heart was filled with a longing love for his wife and child. Yaehatahime grabbed the bridle of his horse and said, choking on her tears: "Look at Yatsuwaka over there. He is an innocent and young child with no idea of the grief that we will

carry. Even up until this evening in our hideout, he was playing happily with that pinwheel, and then, in an instant, we picked him up and fled. Now he continues to hold onto it and won't let go. Oh, how pitiful that he does not know that parents and children part after one lifetime! How awful that people don't realize that such misfortunes are bound to occur!"

Kashiwagi thrust Yatsuwaka in front of Mitsumura's eyes and said: "Look here, Lord Yatsuwaka! This will be your final parting from your parents in this life. Look upon the face of your father and remember him well!" But Yatsuwaka looked uncomprehendingly at Mitsumura's face and simply smiled at him. Mitsumura's courage immediately began to falter. Feeling that his heart was being torn to pieces, he was suddenly overcome with tears that he could not hold back.

Just then, countless torchlights appeared behind them, accompanied by the voices of several hundred people. "It must be our pursuers!" he said. "Hurry before they catch you!" He helped them to escape, and with a single crack of his whip, galloped off to the Lotus Hall.

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It was not long before Miura no zenji Yasumura was falsely accused and compelled to commit ritual suicide. All of his family and retainers sat lined up in front of an image of Yoritomo in the Lotus hall and were prepared to kill themselves when Tarō Mitsumura arrived, galloping on his horse. “I will lead the way to the mountain of death and the river Sanzu!” he shouted. Looking as if he were going to commit suicide, Yasumura stopped him and said: “I have fallen victim to this baseless accusation because of that shape-shifting hag’s slander. It is

good that you were out on a journey and were not captured. I want you to go on living, capture that old witch and interrogate her so that you can clear up this false accusation and restore the Miura family."

Mitsumura replied, saying: "This is a reasonable order, but how can I abandon you and run off somewhere during your last moments? Right or wrong, please allow me to accompany you to the other world!"

Yasumura softened and said: "Have you lost your head, Mitsumura? Dying comes all at once and is simple to do. To live and restore the family is a far more courageous thing to do. If you don't do what I say, I will disown you and your descendants for seven generations!"

Mitsumura had no other choice but to abandon his plans for suicide. Yasumura was overjoyed. He then said: "Now, you must leave this place quickly before the samurai guards arrive!"

Mitsumura wept and wept as he departed in solitude. Then, Yasumura and all of his family and retainers committed suicide.

[Captions]

"Hail the deity of Tsurugaoka" prayed Mitsumura in his heart as he galloped on his horse. "Please spare my father Yasumura's life until I reach the Lotus Hall!"

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